

Delaware wildfire crew headed to Rocky Mountains

SMYRNA, Del. (July 25, 2016) – The Delaware Forest Service is sending a team of 20 wildland firefighters to the Rocky Mountain region for a scheduled two-week assignment to battle wildfires for the [National Interagency Fire Center](#). The crew departed Blackbird State Forest this morning and is headed to Denver, Colorado to be “pre-positioned” for a specific assignment. On July 25, the NIFC’s [National Preparedness Level was increased to 3 on a 5-point scale](#), a reflection of increased fire activity nationwide as well as hot and dry weather conditions across most of the West. Currently, 26 large fires have burned more than 232,000 acres in 12 states. Four new large fires were reported yesterday in Arkansas, Colorado, Florida and Wyoming.



Delaware wildfire crew at Blackbird State Forest: Front Row: (from left) Todd W. Shaffer of Smithsburg, MD; Samuel L. Topper of Federalsburg, MD; Christopher S. Riale of New Castle; Monica Testa of Newark; Adam N. Keever of Newark;

Alexander J. Jenks of Rehoboth Beach. Back Row: (from left) William T. Seybold of Dover; Charles D. Collins of Newark; Todd D. Gsell of Townsend; Nathaniel J. Sommers of Smyrna; Daryl D. Trotman of Milford; Scott A. Veasey of Millsboro; Zachary R. Brown of Harbeson; Spencer F. Valenti of Dover; Bartholomew D. Wilson of Dover; Jeffrey A. Wilson of Clayton; Daniel A. Mihok of Camden; Michael L. Krumrine of Magnolia; Laura K. Yowell of Trappe, MD; and, Christopher R. Valenti of Dover.

Preparedness Level 3 means that “two (2) or more Geographic Areas are experiencing wildland or prescribed fire activities requiring a major commitment of National Resources. Additional resources are being ordered and mobilized through NICC. Type 1 and 2 Incident Management Teams are committed in two (2) or more Geographic Areas and crew commitment nationally is at 50%.” Currently, the [Great Basin Area](#) is at a “4”, the [Rocky Mountain Area](#) is at “3”, and [Southern California](#) is at “3”. The Rocky Mountain Area reported 20 new fires, two new large incidents, and five uncontained large fires. It currently has one Type 1 incident management team in place along with two Type 2 incident teams. Type 1 is the team that handles the most complex and challenging types of wildfires, including those that pose the greatest threat to lives and property.



From left, Spencer Valenti of Dover, Daryl Trotman of Milford, and Zachary Brown of Harbeson load their gear on the bus before departing on the crew's trip to Denver to fight wildfires in the West.



From left, Christopher Riale of New Castle, Charles Collins of Newark, and Bill Seybold of Dover pack their firefighting gear on the bus before the trip out West to fight wildfires in the Rocky Mountain region.



From left, Todd Shaffer briefs firefighters Scott Veasey of Millsboro, Adam Keever of Newark, Alexander Jenks of Rehoboth Beach, Charles Collins of Newark, Todd Gsell of Townsend, Bart Wilson of Dover, Daryl Trotman of Milford, and Bill Seybold of Dover.



Crew boss Sam Topper of the Delaware Forest Service is leading a 20-person team from the First State on a two-week assignment to battle wildfires in the West.

Delaware has been dispatching a crew almost every year since 1998. Last year, [Delaware sent a team](#) to battle [the 36,500-acre Fork Complex Fire in northern California](#). Firefighters are a mix of public agency employees, recruits from volunteer fire companies, and private citizens with a keen interest in fighting wildfires. This year, four are from the [Delaware Forest Service](#), two from DNREC Division of State Parks, one from U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Prime Hook Wildlife Area, and one from New Castle County. Six crew members are "rookies" – i.e., marking their first assignment on a wildfire crew.

Firefighters must prepare both mentally and physically for the annual fire season and achieve certification by the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group](#). In addition to annual training courses held in the spring, crew must complete a rigorous work-capacity test by carrying 45-pounds over a three-mile course in less than 45 minutes. Although compensated by federal funds, all members volunteer for what could become a perilous mission. Crews also helped [hurricane relief efforts for the FEMA when Hurricane Irene swept through New England](#).

Contact: Kyle Hoyd, Delaware Forest Service, kyle.hoyd@delaware.gov or 302-698-4548.

Delaware Wildland Fire Crew Members and Hometowns

<u>Name</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Samual L. Topper (Crew Boss)	Federalsburg, MD
Todd W. Shaffer	Smithsburg, MD
Michael L. Krumrine	Magnolia
Scott A. Veasey	Millsboro
Todd D. Gsell	Townsend
Bartholomew D. Wilson	Dover
Jeffrey A. Wilson	Clayton
Adam N. Kever	Newark
Daryl D. Trotman	Milford
William T. Seybold	Dover
Nathaniel J. Sommers	Smyrna
Daniel A. Mihok	Camden
Alexander J. Jenks	Rehoboth Beach
Laura K. Yowell (R)	Trappe, MD
Christopher R. Valenti (R)	Dover
Spencer F. Valenti (R)	Dover
Zachary R. Brown (R)	Harbeson
Christopher S. Riale (R)	New Castle
Charles D. Collins (R)	Newark
Monica L. Testa	Newark